FEES PAID UNDER THE METROPOLITAN BUILDINGS ACT.

At the close of last session, Lord Morpeth obtained the order of the House of Commons for a return, "for the years ending the 31st day of December, 1845, and the 31st day of December, 1846, of all sums of money received for salaries, or by fees, or from any other source, either by the registrar, official referees, clerks, district surveyors, or by any other person employed in the execution of the Metropolitan Buildings Act, for what purpose, and for what duty or business the same has been received, and by whom received, during the said periods;—and also, return for the like period of all payments made, and all expenses incurred, during the said periods, in the execution of the said Act; also, of all or any sums of money owing to or by the departments of the Metropolitan Buildings Office."

From this which is now before us we abstract the following important particulars:—

The monies paid (or to be paid) by the Woods and Forests on account of the salaries of the referees and registrar for the year 1845 and 1846, amount to 6,005*l.*

The payments made (or due) by the registrar on account of office staff (a surveyor, registrar's clerk, entering clerk, two surveying clerks, and a messenger), and expenses of the office, amount in 1845, to 1,544*l.* (we shall omit the shillings in each case); and in 1846, to 2,125*l.* These sums are chiefly met by the office fees received by the registrar, which amount in 1845 to 1,579*l.*, and in 1846 to 1,212*l.*

The fees received by district surveyors in 1845 (or due) amount to 16,515*l.*, and in 1846, TO THIRTY THOUSAND THREE HUNDRED AND THREE POUNDS!

We subjoin a list of the fees received and due, in each of the several districts, in the year 1846, where the sum exceeds 300*l.*

	Received.	Owing.	Expenses claimed to have been incurred.
City, Northern Division ..	£478	£22	£42
Stratford and Poplar.....	464	74	63
Mile End Old Town.....	352	80	30
Bromley.....	356	94	113
Hackney	1,165	231	276
Bethnal Green	447	314	119
Whitechapel	346	60	20
St. Leonard, Shoreditch ..	843	233	107
Islington.....	1,517	435	216
Clerkenwell	357	38	67
St. Giles and Bloomsbury..	497	63	75
St. Pancras	1,424	238	150
St. Marylebone	816	(no ret.)	265
Paddington	907	952	137
Chelsea	857	466	179
North Kensington.....	534	178	80
South Kensington.....	635	175	124
St. Margaret, Westminster .	488	129	84
St. Martin-in-the-Fields ..	340	91	93
St. George, Hanover-square	552	637	137
Newington, central division of Lambeth, and north division of Battersea.....	899	510	194
St. Saviour, Southwark, and north division of Lambeth	370	117	87
Lambeth, south division ..	556	563	162
Camberwell	500	519	181
Bermondsey	402	284	165
Lewisham	302	243	92
Greenwich	528	107	162

One result to be obtained from the return is, that for the working of the Buildings Act during the years 1845 and 1846, no less a sum than FIFTY-SIX THOUSAND FIVE HUNDRED POUNDS has been expended in the metropolis, exclusive of costs paid by builders and owners to their own surveyors and solicitors, in cases before the referees.

METALLIC ADDRESSES.—The Birmingham newspapers speak of a novel mode of advertising the names of tradesmen, introduced by Mr. S. Hiron, of that town. By a peculiar mode of stamping, this gentleman has been enabled to produce address cards of metal, and which according to the desire of the tradesman for whom they are made, bear the insignia of his profession, his address, and whatsoever recommendation he may think proper. As the material and work give them a degree of value, they are more prized than cards, and form a standing advertisement. The die is also available for stamping letter paper.

AWARDS OF THE OFFICIAL REFEREES.

ADDITIONS TO BUILDINGS.

WITH regard to certain fourth-rate dwelling-houses recently commenced in Albert-street, in the district of St. Pancras, the builder, Mr. Dunsmore, had kept the two lower-most stories open at the back, with a breastsummer, built in and resting upon a pier on each side, with the view of making an addition which would increase the rate of the said houses to a third rate.* The district surveyor wished to have the legality of this mode of proceeding determined, and a joint requisition was sent.

The award was, "that inasmuch as the Metropolitan Buildings Act requires as to the external walls of buildings of whatever class, that every such wall must be carried up of its full thickness to the under side of the plate under the roof, and excepts only all requisite openings for doors and windows and recesses in the walls under certain conditions, and inasmuch as the wall marked 'back front' is not so carried up as required through the story, the surface of the floor of which will contain the greatest number of squares at or above the principal entrance, such wall is not to be taken to be an external inclosing wall of the building for the purpose of ascertaining the area of the building, nor is the proposed 'addition' to be taken to be such an addition as may be made to any building without affecting the rate of the building, but is to be taken as part of the area of the building to be measured in determining the rate of the building; and we do hereby determine and award, that the 'addition' is a part of the area of the building, and that if by such 'addition' the area of the said building (being a building of the first class), will exceed four squares, but will not exceed six squares, such building is of the third-rate of the first class, and not of the fourth-rate."

MAKING GOOD PARTY WALLS.

In the case of certain workshops proposed to be erected against a building in Freston-place, Oxford-street, in the district of Marylebone, the district surveyor was of opinion that the party-wall, or part of it, was improper and insufficient for the purposes of the building proposed to be erected. The upper part of the wall had been rebuilt of proper thickness a short time previously, and the builders referred the matter to the referees, and requested them to determine whether it would be contrary to the Act to allow that part of the wall to remain, "provided all that part and portion of the said party-wall below such portion as may have been lately rebuilt, be taken down and rebuilt, in conformity with and agreeably to the several provisions made and provided for the respective class of building" under which the premises may be respectively classed.

At a meeting it was explained "that the upper story of the present building was fitted up with looms, hung against the party-wall, upon which there are expensive carpets in progress of manufacture, and that to pull down the whole of the wall would cause the occupiers great loss and inconvenience."

The referees determined, "that it will not be contrary to the Metropolitan Buildings Act to remove the lower part of an existing wall, and restore the part removed with new brick-work in mortar or cement, so that the upper part which remains be sound and be not damaged by the removal of the work below, and so that the whole wall, when finished, be in accordance with the rules of the Metropolitan Buildings Act applicable thereto; and we are of opinion that in the present case the district surveyor will be justified in allowing the parties to proceed in the manner proposed, upon the express understanding that if, upon the completion of the new work, the upper part of the wall be found to be so damaged by settlement or otherwise, as in his opinion to require to be taken down and rebuilt, the same be forthwith done to his satisfaction."

THE MINARETS OF CAIRO were considerably shaken by an earthquake on the 7th ult., and rents were produced in buildings instead of by them.

* The addition was 9 feet in depth, and the whole width of the house.

THE GAS MOVEMENT.

"Coming events cast their shadows before them."

IN the conclusion of our last article on this important subject of popular and increasing interest, we took the liberty of directing the attention of gas companies to the frequent experience of Government in effecting great and wide-spread benefits to the public, without the slightest disadvantage—nay, with positive advantage—to the revenue, by immense reductions of taxation on articles in general use. But we might have appealed to their own experience as a class—experience thrust on them *per force*, indeed; but not the less instructive on that account. We shall now, however, before proceeding to other and more hopeful topics, just adduce one single case, well-authenticated, in the shape of evidence led before the Parliamentary committee on the Liverpool gas question, recently published. From that evidence, it appears that since 1834, when the maximum price of one of the companies was 45s. per 1,000 feet, which the other brought down to 15s, "the price has been [further] *pulled down* from 15s. to 12s. 6d., then 9s., then 7s., when it was said that it was *utterly impossible* to have gas made at a lower price; then 5s., when there was another deliberate dead stop, as it was declared to be a losing price,—then, finding it in vain any longer to resist the determination of the consumers that the price should be [still further] reduced, they consented to take something less than a losing price, or 4s. 6d as the maximum." Now as to these very sweeping reductions,—thus administered, like wholesome physic to a restive child, by nasal compulsion,—how are they viewed or esteemed in the present day by those very parties with whom the reiterated pullings down had gone so greatly 'against the grain?' With any thing like the eloquence in their favour with which the 'chief clerk' of the company's own statistical admissions plead,—even taking them at what they are worth,—we cannot pretend to cope; and we shall, therefore, as we fairly may, adduce his evidence verbatim, as an index to the present feeling of his constituents on this interesting and important subject.

Cross-examined:—And your object is to reduce the price [to 3s. 8d.], in case you can have an extension of your capital?—Yes.

Now, then, seeing that the reduction to 4s. 6d. has been a *losing concern*, and seeing only a gleam of sunshine from having borrowed 23,000*l.* from your bankers, on the security of your outstanding accounts,—*is not that an inducement the other way.* Is it not a ground for raising the price to 5s. 6d., instead of reducing it to 3s. 8d.—*Certainly not.*

Just explain how you make that out.—I make it out in this way: that the increased consumption [*to follow* on the reduction] will make up for the deficiency in price.

How is that?—For instance, I shall go back to the year 1842, when we reduced the price to 7s. In that year the income was 17,576*l.* The following year the price was the same, and the nett income was 18,234*l.* The following year we had nine months at 7s., and three months at 6s., and these were the three summer months, consequently only one-sixth of the whole period, and the annual supply of gas; and the income was 19,148*l.* In June, 1845, the price was nine months at 6s., and three months at 5s., and the nett income was 19,361*l.* Therefore we were as well off in 1845 with the price at 6s. and 5s. as in 1842 at 7s; the reason being that [in consequence of the successive reductions] the demand was materially increased, and we were [further] enabled [or rather compelled] to make these reductions in the price.

And all this time, be it specially noted, the price of the raw material,—coal,—was rising:—

"What was the average price in former years? In 1842 it was 12s. 1½d. (per ton); in 1843 it was 12s. 9½d.; in 1846 it was 13s. 8½d.; and the present price is 15s.!"

And then as to the temporary 'deficiency' itself, while awaiting the beneficial result of the *last* reduction with so much and such just confidence in the public demand thus produced; that alleged deficiency is found to have been made up even ere it was sustained:—

"You were not able to pay your dividend [the restricted maximum of 10 per cent.] out of the profits? No: it fell short of the amount of the dividend by 2,661*l.*; but in the month of June, 1845, we had a surplus of 2,665*l.*; and then the

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